

Lothian under fire for lack of pram and wheelchair spaces on new buses

Disabled people and parents with young children are being “shut out of central Edinburgh” by a bus company after it failed to offer additional accessible spaces on its new vehicles.

Lothian has just unveiled its [new double-decker bus](#) which has 100 passenger seats and which is to be rolled out early next year. But despite the capacity increase of around 50 per cent, councillors have asked why only one space on the buses will be made available for either a wheelchair user or a buggy.



Councillor Nick Cook who is Conservative councillor for Morningside

Conservative transport spokesman, Cllr Nick Cook, said: "Moves by Lothian Buses to increase public transport capacity in Edinburgh are to be welcomed.

"However, these new buses are a huge missed opportunity, as they continue to provide only one space for either a wheelchair or buggy on board. Such a move gives little reason to be confident that Edinburgh Council's misguided drive toward banning cards won't reduce city centre accessibility for the disabled and parents of young children.

"The potential for these residents to essentially be shut out of central Edinburgh in this way is completely unacceptable."

Green councillors have also raised eyebrows at the lack of wheelchair and pushchair spaces on the new fleet of

Enviro400XLB buses.



Green Group Cllr
Mary Campbell who
represents
Portobello/Craigmi
llar

Green Cllr Mary Campbell said: "It's not so long ago, when my kids were really small, that I faced the regular lottery as to whether there would be enough buggy space on the bus or not. And, of course, that lottery is so much more so for wheelchair and other less mobile passengers.

"So I am at a loss as to why Lothian Buses has not taken the opportunity to provide more space in these much bigger buses. I'd hope and expect that they sought out the views of the Edinburgh Access Panel and, if so, I'd be surprised if the opportunity was not highlighted then."



Lesley Hinds who retired as a councillor at the last council elections.

Former Labour councillor, Lord Provost and Transport Convener, Lesley Hinds, has also blasted the lack of space for prams. She said: "As a regular Lothian Buses user and a new grandmother I have welcomed the dedicated buggy space in the majority of Lothian Buses.

"Recently on the 29 route, new refurbished London buses have been introduced with one dedicated buggy space. I believed this was a only temporary, until new buses were introduced. I was therefore surprised that the new buses have no dedicated buggy space.

"Lothian Buses have always taken in to account the needs of its fare paying passengers and I hope they will give a commitment to continue to provide a dedicated buggy space in all new and refurbished buses"

The company said some but not all its buses have additional space which can be used for wheelchairs or prams.

A Lothian spokeswoman said: "Our new vehicles offer extra capacity for busy routes across our network, carrying up to 131 customers at any one time.

"These vehicles have been designed to speed up journey times, ease congestion in our city by helping to reduce car usage and ensure we as a business are doing our part to improve air quality across our city. Lothian has operated a fully accessible fleet across Edinburgh and the Lothians since 2009 and these vehicles fully comply with the Disability Discrimination Act."

By Local Democracy Reporter David Bol